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TRENDS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LINGUISTICS AND THE DEBATE IN THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS ACADEMY (1855-1858)¹

Jan Noordegraaf

1. Introduction

During the years 1855-1858 a discussion on spelling took place in the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1855, the orientalist Taco Roorda (1801-1874) delivered a lecture there in which he proposed a reform of the written language as much as possible in the direction of the spoken language. His proposals immediately provoked sharp criticism from more traditionally minded scholars, his principal opponent being Matthias de Vries (1820-1892), professor of Dutch language at the University of Leiden and founder of the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* ('Dictionary of the Dutch Language'). In 1858, Roorda published a book entitled *Verhandeling over het onderscheid en de behoorlijke overeenstemming tusschen spreektaal en schrijftaal* ('Treatise on the difference and the appropriate conformity between spoken and written language'), in which he presented his views in a more elaborate fashion.

In the Netherlands matters of spelling always attract much attention and the Dutch tend to react very emotionally. On this occasion there was also much reaction both from inside and outside the Academy. It would be unjustified, however, to regard the debate I would like to talk about now merely as one of the numerous debates on questions of spelling. I think it is more interesting to notice that here we are actually dealing with a clash between two different views on language and linguistics. It is in this context that such questions arise as: how did Roorda arrive at his views, which his contemporaries even called revolutionary? And what were the linguistics arguments that de Vries advanced against Roorda? Before considering these questions I think it is relevant first to say a few words about the Dutch linguistic scene in the first half of the nineteenth century.

2. Trends in nineteenth-century Dutch linguistics

In the history of Dutch language research in the first half of the nineteenth century one can distinguish three 'research traditions': normative grammar as it was practised, for example, by the followers of J.C. Adelung; historical grammar, introduced into the study of Dutch by Matthias de Vries; and general grammar, of which Taco Roorda can be seen as a leading

¹ Revised and slightly enlarged version of my contribution to *History and Historiography: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on the History of Language Sciences (ICHOLS IV)*, Trier, 24-28 August 1987. Ed. by Hans-Josef Niederehe & Konrad Koerner. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: J. Benjamins 1990, 715-727. The final version of the original paper was prepared during my stay at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies at Wassenaar in the academic year 1987-1988.

representative.²

Normative grammar as it was practised in the Netherlands at the end of the eighteenth century and during the first decades of the nineteenth century was considerably influenced by the German scholar Johann Christoph Adelung (1732-1806). Adelung's *Mithridates oder allgemeine Sprachkunde* (1806-1817) appeared in Dutch in the years 1826-1827. This adaptation, an abridged version in two volumes of the German original, was entitled *Geschied- en letterkundige nasporingen omtrent de afkomst en verspreiding der talen van de onderscheidene volken*; its author was a Dutch polyhistor, Jacob Carel Willem Le Jeune (1775-1864). For details see Noordegraaf 1988, 1994.

It was, however, one of Adelung's other works which had a more profound influence on Dutch linguistics. At the behest of the government of the Batavian Republic the Rotterdam clergyman and grammarian Pieter Weiland (1754-1842) composed a *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* ('Dutch Grammar'), which was published in 1805, and the Leiden professor Matthijs Siegenbeek (1774-1854) - he was one of the first professors of Dutch language - devised a Dutch spelling system in 1804. Both refer to Adelung repeatedly. Weiland's grammar, which can be considered as a neat adaptation of Adelung's *Umständliches Lehrgebäude* (1782), was sanctioned by the government and compellingly prescribed.³ As such, it was most influential until the middle of the century. Numerous schoolbooks and textbooks, both in the Netherlands and without, were based on the *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* in an important measure. Siegenbeek himself excerpted two schoolbooks from Weiland's *Spraakkunst*. A problem that grammarians such as Weiland and Siegenbeek had to solve concerned what was good and proper Dutch. According to them, the standard could only be found in the *written* language, i.e. in the writings of the best Dutch writers.

In this connection we can also observe that the contemporary academic study of Dutch was almost exclusively oriented towards eloquence. The *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres* (1783) by the Scottish professor in rhetoric Hugh Blair (1718-1800), for example, were a rich source for Dutch grammarians and stylisticians. Blair was rather well-known in the Netherlands, not only for his *Sermons* (1777-1801), which were translated into Dutch in the years 1778-1803, but also for his *Lectures*.⁴ As I have been able to show, several sections in Weiland's and Siegenbeek's grammars are based on Blair's lectures, in particular on those concerning the structure of sentences or periods.

The most important German linguist to be mentioned in connection with the introduction of comparative historical grammar in Holland is, without any doubt, Jacob Grimm (1785-1863). Grimm was well-known in the Low Countries from an early stage of his career (Bakker 1977: 131) and the volumes of his *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819-1837) were studied very soon after they had appeared. But it was not until the 1840s that they were used on a larger scale. Matthias de Vries should be especially mentioned here as a devoted follower of Grimm. De Vries studied classical philology at Leiden, but even in his student days he showed a keen interest in the Dutch language, in particular in its older stages. In 1849, he was appointed professor of Dutch

² These research traditions are amply discussed in my study on the history of Dutch linguistics in the nineteenth century (Noordegraaf 1985a). For fuller references and for a detailed discussion of the debate in the Royal Netherlands Academy I would like to refer the reader to chapter 4 of this book, 271-413.

³ It is obvious that both Weiland and Siegenbeek also made use of Adelung's *Deutsche Sprachlehre: Zum Gebrauche der Schulen in den Königl. Preuss. Landen* (1781).

⁴ There are several Dutch editions of these *Lectures*; the first one appeared in 1788-90, the last one in 1845 (see for details Noordegraaf 1985a: 110 sqq., 171-172).

language and literature at Groningen University; a few years later, in 1853, he was appointed to the Dutch chair at Leiden. De Vries was the driving force behind the (still unfinished) *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT, 1864–1998) and within that framework, together with his editorial colleague Lammert Allard te Winkel (1809-1868), he proposed a revision of the Siegenbeek spelling system. His venerated guide in linguistics was Jacob Grimm, with whom he corresponded regularly and whom he visited personally several times (cf. Soeteman 1982).

Taco Roorda (1801-1874), professor of Javanese at the Institution for the Teaching of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnography of the Dutch East Indies at Delft, a college for the training of Dutch colonial civil servants, can be regarded as one of the most prominent nineteenth-century representatives of the tradition of general grammar in the Netherlands. A theologian by education, he showed a keen interest in philosophy, and in the field of linguistics he had developed into an expert on several non-Indo-European languages (Hebrew, Arabic, Javanese). In 1855, he published his *Javaansche Grammatica* ('Javanese Grammar'), which was "by nineteenth-century standards a first-rate and original work and exerted a wide influence on Indonesian linguistic studies" (Uhlenbeck 1964: 50). When studying Javanese he did not opt for a historical-comparative approach, but preferred working along the lines of the general linguistic theory he had expounded in his *Over de deelen der rede en de rede-ontleding* ('On the Parts of Speech and on speech-analysis'; 1852¹, 1855², 1864³), a book devoted to 'logical analysis' (from *logos*, 'word', 'speech', not from *logic*) which was meant to serve as a "basis for the scientific study of language". In this connection I would like to emphasize that in Roorda's view 'logical analysis' is not restricted to sentence analysis; it comprises a full linguistic analysis, including morphology.

To illustrate Roorda's central viewpoints in this respect a brief quotation from the introduction of Roorda's *Javaansche Grammatica* must suffice here:

A true insight into and clear discernment of the meaning of the grammatical ways of expression in the Javanese language can only be obtained by tracing that logical element which is the only truly universal, which is the same in all languages, but which is expressed in the most different ways in the various language families, and in those again differently in every language branch and in every individual language (Roorda 1855: v-vii).

In the introduction to his *Over de deelen der rede*, Roorda complained that the science which treats the general foundations of grammar upon which the grammar of each individual language has to be built, viz. the 'logical analysis of language', had yet to be established, meaning that it had no firm place among the other sciences. According to Roorda that had to do with the poor 'state of the art'. He acknowledged that much work has been done in the first half of the century, pointing out, however, at the same time that even the best and most thorough book on the subject, namely Karl Ferdinand Becker's (1775-1849) *Organism der Sprache* (1841²), had too many shortcomings (Roorda 1852: vi). Thus, in his own book Roorda tried to improve upon the work of Becker. A detailed comparison between Roorda and Becker (van Driel 1988a) shows that Roorda's views resemble Becker's, but that there are also considerable differences between them. For instance, with Roorda the 'logos' concept is dominant and he has a keener eye for the characteristics of linguistic forms. Roorda's logical analysis with its emphasis on language as a vehicle for thought fits into the Humboldtian-Kantian view of language. Apparently there were hardly any relations with French linguists (cf. van Driel 1988a: 247 sqq., 369-370). To be sure, Roorda's essay on general linguistics, which has various idiosyncratic features, is a most interesting book, but I cannot enter into a detailed discussion of *Over de deelen der rede* here. For details, I would like to refer to the thorough study by van Driel (1988a; cf. also van Driel 1988b: 170-173).

3. The debate in the Royal Netherlands Academy

As I mentioned earlier, in 1853 de Vries was appointed professor of Dutch language and literature at Leiden University. From his inaugural lecture it becomes clear that the 'new school in linguistics' had made a decisive breakthrough. According to de Vries (1853: 17) the conception of the study of Dutch as an *ars bene loquendi atque scribendi* was no longer satisfactory. It was nothing but superficial knowledge, restricted entirely to the outward presentation of language. With this formulation de Vries dissociated himself very clearly from the opinions of his former teacher Siegenbeek. Linguistics was no longer an *ars grammatica*. De Vries had discovered what was the "wahre Wissenschaft", namely "the historical study of the living language" (cf. de Vries 1849: 42). Grimm had already argued that the structure of the living language - the language spoken by the ordinary people - could only be explained historically, "nur geschichtlich". The methodological guidelines to be followed are those of unprejudiced observation, without any a priori. De Vries pleads for a strict, inductive method taking his cues from the natural sciences: language, too, is a part of nature, and therefore the linguist should conform to the canons of the prestigious natural sciences.

Two years later, in June 1855, Roorda read a paper before the literary section of the Royal Netherlands Academy, in which he discussed the great discrepancy that existed in Dutch, as well as in other languages, between spoken and written language. He linked up with what de Vries had said in his inaugural lecture about the living language being the real subject matter of linguistics. But Roorda went further and drew some far-reaching conclusions.

Roorda postulated the primacy of spoken language: the spoken language was the living language and what did not conform with it in the written language, was dead. Observation of the living language showed, for example, that Dutch did not have cases like German - in spite of what was taught in the official grammars. Roorda asked himself whether linguistic features specific to the written language that did not occur in spoken language, were really authentic. His answer was that the Dutch language *never* had had inflexional endings, not even in the Middle Ages. All these rules and forms, Roorda said, were no remains of an older language stage, but were artificial or imported from Germany. In short, Roorda argued that inflexion as used in written Dutch was actually the product of a mistaken Latinist germanism.

How did Roorda arrive at this thesis, which his contemporaries even called revolutionary, that Dutch had never known any inflexion? It follows, I think, from his view on language and language change. A language is the expression of the spirit of the people that speaks that language; it can only change if the spirit of the people changes. Hence a language does not essentially change and the basic form remains the same as long as a people keeps its identity and does not become a different people by mixture. As far as the Netherlands were concerned such a mixture had never occurred, and Roorda drew the conclusion that those inflexions had even been alien to the living language in the Middle Ages. He now proposed, that the Dutch had better abolish all these clumsy quasi-archaisms in their writing. We may thus conclude that Roorda pleaded for a return to what he saw as the original situation and consequently for a reform of Dutch spelling.

Roorda's lecture brought indignant protests from Matthias de Vries, Willem Gerard Brill (1811-1896), later to become professor of Dutch in Utrecht, and several other traditionally minded scholars of Dutch, all honourable men who considered the written language more or less as sacrosanct. They even managed to suppress a second paper which Roorda offered for publication in the transactions of the Academy in order to defend his views.

In his first paper Roorda had subscribed to the view put forward by de Vries in his 1853 Leiden lecture, that it was not the literary language that should be the principal subject of the linguist's attention but the living language. But de Vries did not agree at all with the

consequences that Roorda attached to such a point of view, even declaring that he considered Roorda's linguistic principles to be very dangerous. Let us consider now some of the critical comments put forward by de Vries (1858) in greater detail.

Firstly, he argued that the living language as spoken by the people should indeed be the subject-matter of the linguist. But the spoken language ought to be cultivated; it should not serve as a model for written language just as it was. To defend this normative stance de Vries distinguished between 'language nature' and 'language culture', between linguistics and philology. This reminds us of the distinction his close contemporary August Schleicher (1821-1868) made between *Glottik* and *Philologie*, between the *Botaniker* and the *Gärtner*. De Vries appears to focus attention mainly on what Curtius once called the "Culturseite der Sprache" (cf. Curtius 1862: 80) and in doing so de Vries shows a certain aestheticism. As a patriot he considered it his solemn duty to cultivate and improve spoken Dutch. To that end, the philologist must handle language critically and aesthetically, with the written language as the standard.

Secondly, de Vries did not share Roorda's ideas on language change. Explaining his own theoretical views de Vries employed biological terminology taken from Grimm and Schleicher. Change belongs to the very essence of language. Language changes by itself, although external factors may influence the process of change. The uncultivated spoken language has grown and developed "independently of the human will, following fixed and immutable laws". Language is an autonomous organism and lives through periods of growth, prosperity and decline. De Vries made crucial use of the well-known three-way classification of languages into monosyllabic, agglutinative and inflexional languages. He interpreted this classification in an evolutionary sense. The inflexional phase is followed by a phase of deflexion (here de Vries referred to Jacob Grimm's remark upon "das Absteigen von leiblicher Vollkommenheit, das Aufstiegen zu geistiger Vollkommenheit") and such was the position of Dutch in 1850. It was correct, de Vries admitted, that for the greater part the case system did not function anymore, but that was merely a matter of deflexion, not of import from Germany.

As I mentioned earlier, the opposition by de Vries and others prevented Roorda from having his *Verhandeling* published by the Academy, and he was forced to publish it elsewhere. From this reply (1858) we may conclude what linguists he felt strong affinity with. He replied to the comment that his proposals were revolutionary by simply referring to Humboldt's *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues* (1836) (cf. Roorda 1858: 70). Further, in his *Verhandeling* Roorda took as his motto a quotation from the German linguist Karl W.L. Heyse (1797-1855): "Die Schriftsprache muss sich vor Fremdheiten zu wahren suchen. Sie muss sich ferner immer von neuem aus der Volkssprache regenerieren" (Heyse 1856: 230). In Heyse's writings Roorda (1858: 1) found a "perfect expression" of his own ideas on the necessity for written language to regenerate itself continuously on the basis of popular language.

With regard to the idea that human language is something like a living organism Roorda claimed that this was a consequence of a completely wrong conception of language, a conception that should be regarded as entirely *passé* following the publication of Humboldt's *Über die Verschiedenheit*. Locutions such as the "wearing off" of inflexional endings were nothing but very dangerous metaphors (Roorda 1858: 17). With regard to language classification, Roorda rejected de Vries's distinction as inadequate and incomplete. He was of the opinion that both *Die Classification der Sprachen* (1850) by Heymann Steinthal (1823- 1899) and Karl Heyse's *System der Sprachwissenschaft* (1856) contained superior observations (Roorda 1858: 70-71).

4. The aftermath of the debate

4.1. *The 'new school in linguistics' and its victory*

The debate in the Royal Academy caused so much commotion that it became more or less a public affair (cf. Noordegraaf 1985a: 355 sqq.). It must be concluded that Roorda interpreted the facts incorrectly and consequently lost the debate. But apart from that, there were several scholars who wanted to follow him on the practical level: they, too, felt the need to reform the Dutch spelling. But only in the 1890s did a strong spelling reform movement get off the ground which tried to bring the artificial written language in line with the spoken standard language (cf. van Essen 1983: 50 sqq.). It was only natural that the leading figures of this movement harked back "to such unorthodox language scholars" (van Essen 1983: 52) as Taco Roorda. However, let us first consider the contemporary theoretical context of the debate more closely.

The "new school in linguistics", as it was called later on (Moltzer 1865), found a spokesman in de Vries, whose inaugural lecture contained a plea for 'rigor' inspired by August Schleicher's *Linguistische Untersuchungen* (1850). This address may be seen as an attempt to have done with the prescriptive grammar as practised by his predecessors. What de Vries, a classical scholar of origin, wanted to do for the study of Dutch was to make a science of it. In 1853 he had come to Leiden, as he wrote to Jacob Grimm, in order to help "a subject unduly neglected for so long" flourish at last, as well as to raise the study of the mother tongue to the same level as that of the classical languages (cf. Soeteman 1982: 40). This relatively late introduction of historical method had to do with the fact that Young Turks such as de Vries had to wait until the old guard, the first generation of academic researchers of Dutch, Matthijs Siegenbeek and others, had passed away.

But de Vries, who may indeed be said to be "the founder of modern Dutch philology" (van Haeringen 1954: 11), was also a scholar who was very much devoted to the cultivation of language: he was greatly concerned about the cultural side of language. It thus appears to me that the harshness of his attack on Roorda had a double impetus: on the one hand de Vries felt compelled to defend his newly found truth, while on the other hand his normative orientation was at issue: spoken language should not become the standard for written language.

There can be little doubt that in retrospect Roorda's heresies actually represented sound ideas which found favour with some contemporary and later scholars; however, in this discussion Roorda sometimes made use of unsound arguments and examples which were in direct conflict with the results of historical Indo-European and Germanic linguistics. But Roorda's observations on contemporary Dutch were not challenged, not even by de Vries, and no Dutch linguist has ever since supported the idea that language should be seen as an independent organism.

The heart of the matter is this: Roorda was not particularly interested in the historical development of a language, preferring to study a language as it was "at a certain moment"; he mainly considered language as "Etwas von heute" (Grimm). Roorda had the ability to look at the facts of a language "without any historical bias and with a remarkable insight in the synchronic reality of a language" (Uhlenbeck 1964: 52). The remark has been made that the main body of Roorda's *Javaansche Grammatica* (1855) was "purely descriptive and synchronic in character" (Teeuw 1971: xxvi). I think we can associate Roorda's position with Humboldt's well-known statement that language is an *energeia*, not an *ergon*. After all, in his reply Roorda (1858: 70) referred to Humboldt's famous work of 1836.

Although it is clear that Roorda's a-historical approach did not attract many followers in contemporary linguistic circles, it should be emphasized that his work should not only be seen in the light of nineteenth-century general grammar, but also as an example of continued general

linguistic study for pedagogical purposes. In the early 1850s, for instance, Roorda's loyal disciple, Gerard van Wieringhen Borski (1800-1869), presented a first adaptation of *Over de deelen der rede* for the benefit of primary education. Thanks to van Wieringhen Borski and other teachers and schoolmasters, logical analysis became an established subject in Dutch school grammar, and was to remain so to the present day.

4.2. Indonesian language study: Van der Tuuk

In the 1860s Roorda's views on language provoked another discussion, this time in the very field of the study of Indonesian languages. On this occasion, Roorda had to cross swords with Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk (1824-1894), a doctor honoris causa of Utrecht University, who had been sent by the Dutch Bible Society to Sumatra to study the Toba Batak language. After many years in the colonies, he returned to the Netherlands working out his notes gathered in Sumatra and preparing his grammar (1858-1868). Van der Tuuk can be characterized as and adherent of determinism and a hard-boiled positivist.

From the brochures van der Tuuk published around the mid-1860s, it becomes abundantly clear that this field linguist was by no means ready to subscribe to Roorda's linguistic views or to accept Roorda's Javanese grammar as a model for the description of other Indonesian languages (Uhlenbeck 1964: 51). The basis of the severe clash which ensued between these two linguists (cf. van Driel 1984) lay in the fact that van der Tuuk followed the methods of historical-comparative trend - his approach has been characterized as typically pre-*junggrammatisch*. One can understand a language solely "the historical way", van der Tuuk argued. He rejected once and for all Roorda's "philosophical" approach: the history of the study of language shows that one cannot penetrate deeply into a language with the help of a philosophical method. Van der Tuuk's heroes were Franz Bopp (1791-1867) and Jacob Grimm, whereas Wilhelm von Humboldt was considered to be merely "a dabbler in linguistics". His sources included the works of August Schleicher and Max Müller (1823-1900).

I would like to emphasize that van der Tuuk's polemic against Roorda was the only time that the latter's approach in linguistics as such was brought under discussion from 'outside', i.e. from a different 'paradigm' - after all, de Vries had not publicly ventured to reject general grammar as such, but had only focussed on its results. Admittedly, in hindsight one can hardly say that the Roorda-van der Tuuk controversy has resulted in a fruitful exchange of theoretical views: the discussion was too much marred by strong personal notes. Roorda further fully concentrated on preparing a new Javanese dictionary; he died in 1873. Van der Tuuk left for the Dutch East Indies in 1868, and was never to see his fatherland again.

4.3. Living language: Jacob van Lennep and his *Comic Grammar*

One of the scholars who sought to follow Roorda on the practical level was the Dutch man of letters Jacob van Lennep (1802-1868), who was also a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy. The year 1865 saw the publication of van Lennep's *Vermakelijke Spraakkunst* ('Comic Dutch Grammar'), a book which can be neatly characterized as a Dutch version of Percival Leigh's (1813-1889) *The Comic English Grammar: A new and facetious introduction to the English tongue* (1840).⁵ And Leigh's book can be regarded as a 'comic' version of the well-known *English*

⁵ One of his correspondents, the great nineteenth-century Dutch writer, Multatuli (pseudonym of Eduard Douwes Dekker, 1820-1887), had written to van Lennep on 25 January 1860: "Why don't you write a Dutch grammar? Such a work from you would be welcomed and it might contribute to more uniformity in our written language" (Multatuli, *Volledige Werken*, vol. 10, Amsterdam 1960, pp. 203-204).

Grammar written in 1795 by Lindley Murray (1725-1826).⁶

In the late 1850s, Jacob van Lennep had endorsed Roorda's point of view, and, consequently, in the *Vermakelijke Spraakkunst*, which was a quite popular book at the time it appeared, one can not only find samples of the spoken living language, but also various explicit approving references to Roorda and the views the latter had put forward in the debate in the Academy. There are many jibes, however, at de Vries's conservative colleague, the honourable Willem G. Brill. I think it is safe to conclude that in composing his comic grammar, van Lennep had sought to make a serious contribution to the debate concerning spoken and written language that was to keep Dutch linguistics under its spell for many years to come.

In the early 1890s, the fourth edition of this book brought Roorda's opinions to the attention of a new generation of linguists and schoolmasters associated with the periodical *Taal en Letteren* (1891-1906), a "new and heretical revolutionary journal", which was to breathe new life into philology and to revolutionize native language education in the Netherlands under the slogan 'language is sound'. The reprint was welcomed by a new generation of educators who saw Taco Roorda as their forerunner in the battle against the dominance of the written language. Small wonder then that in *Taal en Letteren* van Lennep's grammar was hailed as most instructive for those who were studying the mother tongue (cf. *Taal en Letteren* 1 (1891), 78).

5. Concluding remarks

In the debate in the Academy we see a clash of two research traditions. Both traditions are inspired by the conceptions of German linguists. On the one side we see the Grimm-Schleicher connection, on the other side we have the Humboldt-Steinthal-Heyse line. This observation brings me to some final remarks: general grammar in Holland was not modelled after the French *grammaire générale*, rather, it followed the pattern of the German *Allgemeine Grammatik*.⁷ This is also evident in the works of Lammert A. te Winkel, who was an expert in historical grammar, but in contrast with his friend de Vries also very interested in what nowadays we would call general linguistics. Roorda's debate with de Vries prompted te Winkel to attack Roorda's theory of logical analysis. In his monographs of 1858 and 1859 and in his numerous papers in the linguistic periodical *De Taalgids* (1859-1868) he followed the lead of Steinthal's *Grammatik, Logik und Psychologie* (1855) in discussing at length problems concerning the foundations of linguistics and matters of a general linguistic nature. Due to his untimely death te Winkel did not succeed in finishing the comprehensive grammar he intended to write, but his inspiring reflections on language and the study of language have had a considerable impact, in particular in the field of Dutch school grammar.

It appears that te Winkel saw no incompatibility between his studies in the field of general grammar and his activities in the field of historical linguistics. Like Roorda, he was highly interested in theoretical problems and he, too, regarded a non-historical approach as methodologically valid. Te Winkel held the opinion that comparative historical grammar did not

It can indeed be established that the preserved "first version" of the *Vermakelijke Spraakkunst*, probably a revision of a lost translation of the *Comic Grammar* from the years 1856-57, dates to February 1860. See Noordegraaf 1986 for details. (With thanks to Dr Eep Francken, Leiden).

⁶ Cf. Noordegraaf 1996 for details.

⁷ For the impact of the works of Becker's follower Raimund Jakob Wurst (1800-1845) on Dutch schoolgrammar cf. Noordegraaf & Bierling 1986.

encompass the whole study of language. And in the same vein as the distinguished American scholar William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894) several years later (cf. Whitney 1875: 318-19), te Winkel (1860: 171) noted that the substantial growth of comparative historical grammar had been at the expense of the development of a real "science of language" and in the 1860s he did his best to contribute to the development of that very science of language. It resulted in a local variant, so to speak, of general grammar.⁸

My conclusion is that the 1850s and 1860s were an important period in the development of linguistics in the Netherlands. Historical linguistics gained a footing in the academic curriculum, and the same decades saw a flourishing (by Dutch standards, at least) of general grammar which would last for some fifteen years. Roorda's *Over de deelen der rede* of 1852, which was reprinted twice (in 1855 and 1864), and had a few loyal followers. Te Winkel published two critical monographs (1858, 1859), and dozens of articles in which he tried to amend Roorda's views. In the field of school grammar te Winkel's publications had a lot of influence. These activities are rather striking when we take into consideration the global image of nineteenth-century linguistics being dominated by a historical and comparative approach. It is interesting to note that in the Netherlands only the mid-1860s witnessed a fundamental and explicit criticism of general grammar as such. However, the severe criticism of Roorda's linguistic views by empiricist scholars such as de Vries and van der Tuuk had a devastating effect. 'Logical analysis' became discredited as a serious approach to linguistics. Thus, the tradition of general grammar as supported by Roorda and te Winkel was not developed further within scholarly circles. It was mainly in school grammar that this tradition was continued.

Be this as it may, I think that we are forced to assume the co-existence of several nineteenth-century research traditions developing relatively independently (cf. Auroux 1983: 11), and that we have to realize that the progress of linguistic science is sometimes determined to a considerable extent by local developments and local situations.

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⁸ Unfortunately, no monograph has been written so far on this influential and versatile Dutch linguist. For a first exploration see van Helvoort 1982; cf. also van Driel 1988a: 205 sqq., van Driel 1995.

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